

How the West Was Defeated, by Pepe Escobar - The Unz Review

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Emmanuel Todd, historian, demographer, anthropologist, sociologist and political analyst, is part of a dying breed: one of the very few remaining exponents of old school French *intelligentsia* – a heir to those like Braudel, Sartre, Deleuze and Foucault who dazzled successive young Cold War generations from the West down to the East.

The first nugget concerning his latest book, *La Défaite de L'Occident* (“The Defeat of the West”) is the minor miracle of actually being published last week in France, right within the NATO sphere: a hand grenade of a book, by an independent thinker, based on facts and verified data, blowing up the whole Russophobia edifice erected around the “aggression” by “Tsar” Putin.

At least some sectors of strictly oligarch-controlled corporate media in France simply could not ignore Todd this time around for several reasons. Most of all because he was the first Western intellectual, already in 1976, to have predicted the fall of the USSR in his book *La Chute Finale*, with his research based on Soviet infant mortality rates.

Another key reason was his 2002 book *Après L'Empire*, a sort of preview of the Empire’s Decline and Fall published a few months before Shock & Awe in Iraq.

Now Todd, in what he has defined as his last book (“I closed the circle”) allows himself to go for broke and meticulously depict the defeat not only of the US but of the West as a whole – with his research focusing in and around the war in Ukraine.

Considering the toxic NATOstan environment where Russophobia and cancel culture reign supreme, and every deviation is punishable, Todd has been very

careful not to frame the current process as a Russian victory in Ukraine (although that's implied in everything he describes, ranging from several indicators of social peace to the overall stability of the "Putin system", which is "a product of the history of Russia, and not the work of one man").

Rather, he focuses on the key reasons that have led to the West's downfall. Among them: the end of the nation-state; de-industrialization (which explains NATO's deficit in producing weapons for Ukraine); the "degree zero" of the West's religious matrix, Protestantism; the sharp increase of mortality rates in the US (much higher than in Russia), along with suicides and homicides; and the supremacy of an imperial nihilism expressed by the obsession with Forever Wars.

The Collapse of Protestantism

Todd methodically analyses, in sequence, Russia, Ukraine, Eastern Europe, Germany, Britain, Scandinavia and finally The Empire. Let's focus on what would be the 12 Greatest Hits of his remarkable exercise.

1. At the start of the Special Military Operation (SMO) in February 2022, the combined GDP of Russia and Belarus was only 3.3% of the combined West (in this case the NATO sphere plus Japan and South Korea). Todd is amazed how these 3.3% capable of producing more weapons than the whole Western colossus not only are winning the war but reducing dominant notions of the "neoliberal political economy" (GDP rates) to shambles.
2. The "ideological solitude" and "ideological narcissism" of the West – incapable of understanding, for instance, how "the whole Muslim world seems to consider Russia as a partner rather than an adversary".
3. Todd eschews the notion of "Weberian states" – evoking a delicious compatibility of vision between Putin and US realpolitik practitioner John Mearsheimer. Because they are forced to survive in an environment where only power relations matters, states are now acting as "Hobbesian agents." And that brings us to the Russian notion of a nation-state, focused on "sovereignty": the

capacity of a state to independently define its internal and external policies, with no foreign interference whatsoever.

4. The implosion, step by step, of WASP culture, which led, “since the 1960s”, to “an empire deprived of a center and a project, an essentially military organism managed by a group without culture (in the anthropological sense)”. This is Todd defining the US neocons.

5. The US as a “post-imperial” entity: just a shell of military machinery deprived of an intelligence-driven culture, leading to “accentuated military expansion in a phase of massive contraction of its industrial base”. As Todd stresses, “modern war without industry is an oxymoron”.

6. The demographic trap: Todd shows how Washington strategists “forgot that a state whose population enjoys a high educational and technological level, even if it is decreasing, does not lose its military power”. That’s exactly the case of Russia during the Putin years.

7. Here we reach the crux of Todd’s argument: his post-Max Weber reinterpretation of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, published a little over a century ago, in 1904/1905: “If Protestantism was the matrix for the ascension of the West, its death, today, is the cause of the disintegration and defeat.”

Todd clearly defines how the 1688 English “Glorious Revolution”, the 1776 American Declaration of Independence and the 1789 French Revolution were the true pillars of the liberal West. Consequently, an expanded “West” is not historically “liberal”, because it also engineered “Italian fascism, German Nazism and Japanese militarism”.

In a nutshell, Todd shows how Protestantism imposed universal literacy on the populations it controlled, “because all faithful must directly access the Holy Scriptures. A literate population is capable of economic and technological development. The Protestant religion modeled, by accident, a superior, efficient

workforce.” And it is in this sense that Germany was “at the heart of Western development”, even if the Industrial Revolution took place in England.

Todd’s key formulation is undisputable: “The crucial factor of the ascension of the West was Protestantism’s attachment to alphabetization.”

Moreover Protestantism, Todd stresses, is twice at the heart of the history of the West: via the educational and economic drive – with fear of damnation and the need to feel chosen by God engendering a work ethic and a strong, collective morality – and via the idea that Men are unequal (remember the White Man’s Burden).

The collapse of Protestantism could not but destroy the work ethic to the benefit of mass greed: that is, neoliberalism.

Transgenderism and the Cult of the Fake

8. Todd’s sharp critique of the spirit of 1968 would merit a whole new book. He refers to “one of the great illusions of the 1960s – between Anglo-American sexual revolution and May 68 in France”; “to believe that the individual would be greater if freed from the collective”. That led to an inevitable debacle: “Now that we are free, en masse, from metaphysical beliefs, foundational and derived, communist, socialist or nationalist, we live the experience of the void.” And that’s how we became “a multitude of mimetic midgets who do not dare to think by themselves – but reveal themselves as capable of intolerance as the believers of ancient times.”

9. Todd’s brief analysis of the deeper meaning of transgenderism completely shatters the Church of Woke – from New York to the EU sphere, and will provoke serial fits of rage. He shows how transgenderism is “one of the flags of this nihilism that now defines the West, this drive to destroy, not just things and humans but reality.”

And there’s an added analytical bonus: “The transgender ideology says that a man may become a woman, and a woman may become a man. This is a false affirmation, and in this sense, close to the theoretical heart of Western nihilism.” It gets worse, when it

comes to the geopolitical ramifications. Todd establishes a playful mental and social connection between this cult of the fake and the Hegemon's wobbly behavior in international relations. Example: the Iranian nuclear deal clinched under Obama becoming a hardcore sanctions regime under Trump. Todd: "American foreign policy is, in its own way, gender fluid."

10. Europe's "assisted suicide". Todd reminds us how Europe at the start was the Franco-German couple. Then after the 2007/2008 financial crisis, that turned into "a patriarchic marriage, with Germany as a dominant spouse not listening to his companion anymore". The EU abandoned any pretention of defending Europe's interests – cutting itself off from energy and trade with its partner Russia and sanctioning itself. Todd identifies, correctly, the Paris-Berlin axis replaced by the London-Warsaw-Kiev axis: that was "the end of Europe as an autonomous geopolitical actor". And that happened only 20 years after the joint opposition by France-Germany to the neocon war on Iraq.

11. Todd correctly defines NATO by plunging into "their unconscious": "We note that that its military, ideological and psychological mechanism does not exist to protect Western Europe, but to control it."

12. In tandem with several analysts in Russia, China, Iran and among independents in Europe, Todd is sure that the US obsession – since the 1990s – to cut off Germany from Russia will lead to failure: "Sooner or later, they will collaborate, as "their economic specializations define them as complementary". The defeat in Ukraine will open the path, as a "gravitational force" reciprocally seduces Germany and Russia.

Before that, and unlike virtually any Western "analyst" across the mainstream NATOstan sphere, Todd understands that Moscow is set to win against the whole of NATO, not merely Ukraine, profiting from a window of opportunity identified by Putin in early 2022. Todd bets on a window of 5 years, that is, an endgame by 2027. It's enlightening to compare with Defense Minister Shoigu, on the record, last year: the SMO will end by 2025.

Whatever the deadline, inbuilt in all this is a total Russia victory – with the winner dictating all terms. No negotiations, no ceasefire, no frozen conflict – as the Hegemon is now desperate spinning.

Davos enacts The Triumph of the West

Todd's ample merit, so evident in the book, is to use history and anthropology to take Western society's false consciousness to the divan. And that's how, focusing for instance in the study of very specific family structures in Europe, he manages to explain reality in a way that totally escapes the brainwashed collective West masses lingering under turbo-neoliberalism.

It goes without saying that Todd's reality-based book will not be a hit among the Davos elites. What's happening this week in Davos has been immensely enlightening. Everything is out in the open.

From all the usual suspects – the toxic EU Medusa von der Leyen; NATO's warmongering Stoltenberg; BlackRock, JP Morgan and assorted honchos shaking hands with their sweaty sweatshirt toy in Kiev – the “Triumph of the West” message is monolithic.

War is Peace. Ukraine is *not* (italics mine) losing and Russia is not winning. If you disagree with us – on anything – you will be censored for “hate speech”. We want the New World Order – whatever you lowly peasants think – and we want it now.

And if all fails, a pre-fabricated Disease X is comin' to get you.